



Executive Summary

Monitoring the health status of a population is an essential step in evaluating the effectiveness of various health programs and in developing programmatic policy for the future. Monitoring the health status of a population relative to certain health status indicators over a number of years is an especially effective tool for health planning. Act 985 of the 1995 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session, enacting R.S. 40:1300.71, requires that the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals shall annually prepare a health report card relative to health and health-related issues. This annual health report card shall be submitted at least sixty days prior to each regular session.

The following pages comprise the fourth annual Health Report Card. This document reports on the overall state of health in Louisiana, addressing at a minimum the following issues:

- Health findings of major diseases
- Teenage pregnancy and birth rates
- Rates of low birth weight babies
- Suicide rates
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Incidence of drug addictions
- Violent deaths
- Morbidity rates
- Health assessment programs and results
- Results of preventive health outreach programs
- Assessment of the state health care delivery system

The report card is divided into six major sections. The first three sections are "Population and Vital Statistics," "Morbidity," and "Health Assessment Programs." These contain data relative to each health status indicator listed above for the state as a whole and for the parishes within the state. There are comparisons with prior years and with other states. In some cases, variations among different segments of the state's population are reported.

The last three sections address current health care initiatives, the state's health care delivery system, and future measures for health status improvement. These sections are: "Preventive Health Outreach and Service Programs," "Louisiana State Health Care System," and "Recommendations for Improving Health Status."

This report is the result of efforts by individuals throughout the Department of Health and Hospitals. To contact the individual programs that contributed to this document, please refer to the listing of Program Office telephone numbers in the "Contact Information" table on page 179.



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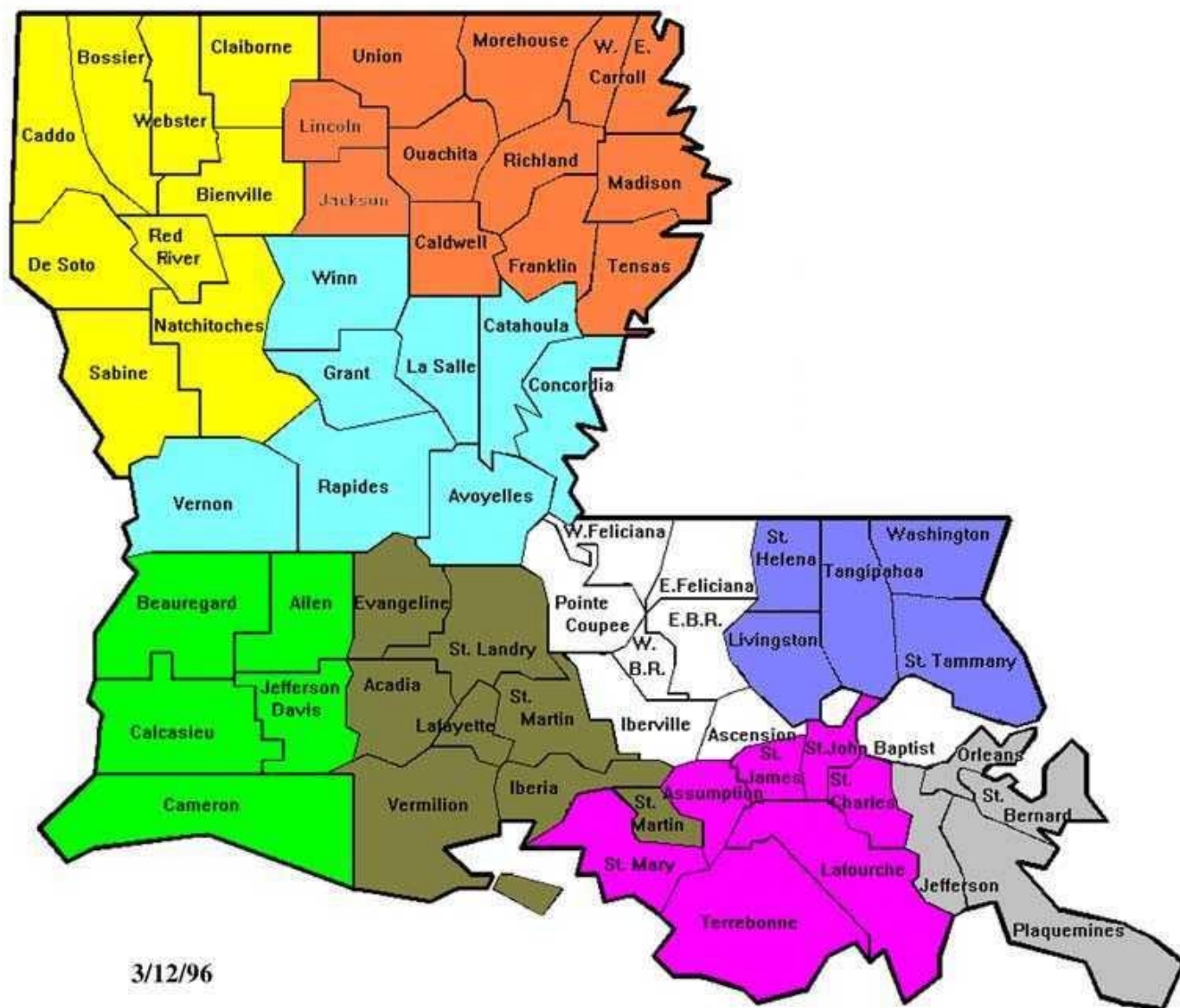
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Department of Health and Hospitals February 1999

